

# CHANDAMAMA

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It was Raju's little sister Meena's birthday. It was a grand occasion for Raju. Nandu, Vinay, Rekha, Ashok all were to come with beautiful presents.

Raju couldn't think of a gift. He wanted to present something very very special.

He thought and thought and thought. Suddenly he hit upon an idea.

A mask, a beautiful colourful mask. Green stripes on the cap, pink on the cheeks, crimson lips.

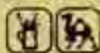
With dashes of paint in no time he painted a mask on a piece of cardboard and cut it into shape.

What a colourful present: Meena was delighted.

Everyone talked about Raju and his wonderful present.

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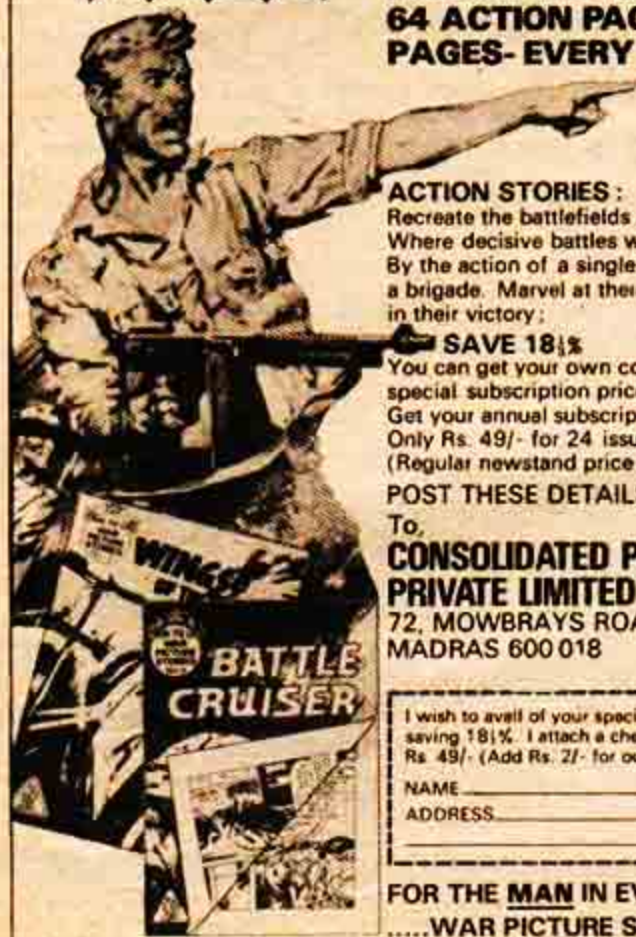
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PLUS SEVEN STORIES AND  
SEVEN OTHER FEATURES

## GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

आश्वः क्षस्त्रं वास्त्रं वीणा वली नरस्त्रं नारी च ।  
पुरुषविस्त्रेभ्यं प्राप्ता भवन्ति वीणा अयोध्यासु ॥

*Aśvaḥ śaśtraṁ vāstraṁ vīṇā vālī naraśca nārī ca  
Puruṣaviśtreṣu prāptā bhavanti vīṇā ayodhyāsu*

The proper or improper use of a horse, a weapon, the scripture, the veena, the speech as well as men and women depends on who is using them.

— The Hitopadeshaḥ





Controlling Editor: NAGI REDDI

## SALUTE TO THE MARTYRS

We are observing the 50th Anniversary of the martyrdom of Chandra Shekhar Azad and Bhagat Singh. Both of them laid down their lives in the cause of India's freedom, in the year 1931. Chandra Shekhar Azad died in an exchange of fire; Bhagat Singh was hanged, despite strong appeals from all quarters to spare that precious life.

They believed in securing the freedom of the country through struggle and revolution. Freedom, achieved through heroic sacrifice, would elevate the spirit of the country—they thought.

Those who knew these young men testify to their great courage and nobility—qualities that are rare, but without which no country can ever rise. If such qualities were necessary for freedom-struggle yesterday, they are more in demand today for building up India as a worthy nation, befitting her glorious past.

We give a brief account of the heroic deeds of Chandra Shekhar Azad in this issue. In the issue next, we will recount the saga of Bhagat Singh.



## FROM ONE GATEWAY TO ANOTHER

"You have already visited three of the four major cities of India: Delhi, Calcutta, and Bombay. You ought to see the fourth one—Madras—the Gateway to South India," observed Shyam Gupta, Ravi's uncle.

Ravi and Raman looked at each other meaningfully. They ought to! They would love to! but how to go there?

"If you promise to write an essay on the four major cities, I shall arrange a trip for you to Madras," said Mr. Shyam Gupta.

"O Uncle, how kind of you! We'll surely write the essay!" the two boys said in unison, **clapping their hands**. "How nice it would be to see the Gateway to South India after we have seen the Gateway of India!"

Shyam Gupta had started a new business. His partner, Mr. Sadasivam, belonged to Madras and business took Gupta there from time to time. His partner lived in a large ancestral house—always happy to receive guests.

It was during their Dusserah





vacation that Ravi and Raman reached Madras, their trains arriving at the Central Station one after the other, with an hour's interval. Shyam Gupta and his friend Mr. Sadasivam received the boys.

Although a metropolis, Madras wore a relaxed look and that impressed the boys.

"Where are we going now, Uncle?" Ravi asked Gupta in the car.

"To Mr. Sadasivam's house at T. Nagar," replied Gupta.

"T. Nagar? Has the name anything to do with Tata Nagar?" queried Raman.

"No, my boy, it is a short form of Thyagaraja Nagar, named after the saintly musi-

cian-poet, Shri Thyagaraja," informed Mr. Sadasivam.

"I have heard his compositions, but I do not know much about him," said Raman.

"Well, he did not belong to any remote age, but the later part of the 18th century and early 19th century. His great grandfather, hailing from Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh, had settled down near Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu. Thyagaraja was a great devotee of Rama. He is said to have composed 24,000 songs. The number equals the number of slokas in Valmiki's *Ramayana*," said Mr. Sadasivam.

"How beautiful is this temple! And whose statue is



this?" It was Ravi who viewed the monuments to his right with great curiosity.

"This is Valluvar Kottam—built to honour the memory of Sage Tiruvalluvar, the author of the *Kural*. Have you read the book?" asked Sadasivam.

Ravi and Raman kept quiet.

"I shall read out some parts of the book to you. Wonderful verses are there—giving us both practical and higher wisdom through simple but highly poetical verses," said Mr. Sadasivam.

"Did he live here?" asked Raman.

"He lived, it is believed, nearly two thousand years ago, at Mylapore, another area of this city. Legend says that he

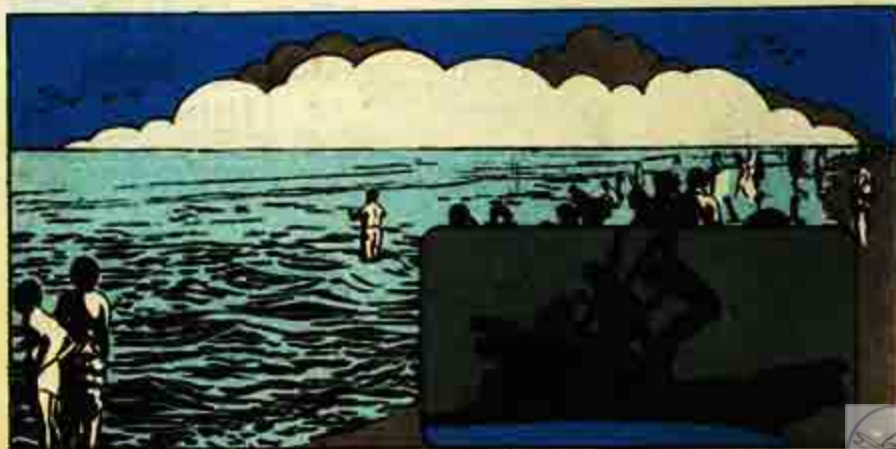
was a poor man, and he earned his living as a weaver. But in richness of thought he was the king among thinkers," said Mr. Sadasivam.

"I read in some old book that many centuries ago Mylapore itself was a prosperous city—the capital of a Raja. Is that true?" asked Shyam Gupta.

"True. It seems that a part of the old Mylapore has been swallowed up by the sea," said Mr. Sadasivam.

"How far is the sea?" asked Ravi.

"Close by. I'll drive you along the Marina—one of the most excellent sea promenades in the world—by sundown," said Mr. Sadasivam.





# THE LEGEND OF THE GOLDEN VALLEY

By Manoj Das

## 3. THE MYSTERIOUS WATER FALL

"My lord!" said a courtier in a cracked voice.

"Your Awful Majesty!" croaked another.

They could say nothing more. They were yet to grasp the situation. How could their king have come away to that haunted place at the instance of a mere boy?

The king sneezed. The minister gave out a cry of horror. "I have always been of the firm opinion," he observed, "that the morning breeze is

most harmful—particularly for the pure royal blood."

"This chap is kidding me!" the king complained to his well-wishers.

"I am not!" shouted Raju. "Gentlemen, will you please tell His Awful Majesty what you see in the cavern yonder?"

The members of the Circle of the Wisest looked up in great earnest.

"I can see an owl," said the minister.

"And there is that spider—a





rising to the occasion; two of them took charge of a leg each of Raju and the third one his neck. The remaining two, deprived of the chance to use their hands, dangled them like unwanted things.

Raju, too surprised at the failure of those wise men to see the image, put forth no resistance.

But as the party looked up again towards the cavern, ready to carry Raju there, a chorus of soft shrieks escaped their lips. They dropped Raju and kept on gazing at the cavern. Raju was surprised again.

"Wonderful, wonderful!" exclaimed one of them.

"Stop!" the king silenced the courtier, "It is for me to say that word. Wonderful, wonderful! Wonderful as-as-as-." He scratched his head and resumed, "The *luddo*, no no, I mean as wonderful as many *luddoos*, still more *luddoos*...no, no..."

"May I suggest, my lord, wonderful as the rainbow, as the very lotus she holds, or as a nymph from some paradise..." said Raju.

"How wonderful you too are, my boy, for, I know—I'm no fool—it is by my touching you that I got the sight to see her!"

fat one like that I've never seen," said the chief courtier.

"O God!" shouted Raju again, "Don't you see the golden statue of the hoary legend—looking so beautiful right at the centre of the cavern?"

"Golden statue of the hoary legend? Why! This chap has gone crazy!" observed the chief courtier with anguish. The rest agreed with him.

"Take him to the centre of the cavern and hurl him down, down into the pit!" growled the king. He took hold of Raju's right hand himself. The minister took hold of the left. The five courtiers lost no time in



The king complimented and hugged Raju.

"So was it with me," said the minister, and the rest of the wisest said the same thing, all looking at Raju with affection.

"Your Awful Majesty, do you know how wonderful you have suddenly begun to look yourself by looking at her?" asked Raju with a twinkle in his eyes.

"No, I don't! Where is my mirror, my mirror, my mirror!" The king looked impatient. "Will one of you fetch my mirror?"

But the courtiers seemed engrossed in the golden statue.

"And these worthy courtiers too look so fine!" observed Raju.

"I see." The king became grave. He walked past his courtiers who stood as motionless as the decaying pillars around them. They continued looking at the statue.

"But they've no business to look beautiful, for it is I who am going to marry the damsel when she comes to life, not any one of these nincompoops!" the king said gingerly.

"Marry, Your Awful Highness?" Raju's brow was quenched.

"What else?" the king betra-



yed surprise at Raju's naivety. "What else should she come to life for? It is common sense that I ought to marry her!"

"Er-er-such a proposition had never struck me!" confessed Raju who was not sure that the king spoke common sense.

The king laughed benignly. "Certain things are meant for striking the blessed mind of only a king like me," he informed.

"I'm sure, Your Awful....." Raju said rather suddenly.

"I was sure before you, my boy....." the king chuckled. "I'll surely be pleased to take her for a wife."

Unmindful of the king's en-





thusiasm, said Raju, "I'm sure, Your Awful Majesty, that you are being unwise."

"How d'you say so?" demanded the king, twirling his moustachio.

"Yeh, hah d'u sasso?" echoed the courtiers. They too twirled their moustachio, though two of them had none.

"I say so from your face. You looked so handsome only a little while ago! That was when you marvelled at the statue with innocence, with true wonder and adoration. Had your thought of marrying her been proper, you'd have continued to look the same. But with your arro-

gant wish, you have become as ugly as ever—all—all of you!" said Raju.

"Ugly? You dare call me ugly?" The king clenched his fists.

"And us too?" the courtiers yelled in a chorus.

Simultaneously they rushed upon Raju. In a swift move Raju gave them the slip. He leaped from rock to rock with the smartness of a squirrel—advancing towards the mysterious waterfall.

The minister and the courtiers tried to pursue him. They showed much courage in jumping from one rock to another. They were grouped in pairs. Each held the other in his clasp.

But, as they were not meant for feats, they tumbled off the rocks one after another, bruising their noses and losing their turbans. Two of them remained hanging like cucumbers.

Raju stood smiling, right before the waterfall.

"It is dangerous down there, boy!" shouted the king.

"No more dangerous, I suppose, than up there, Your Awful," shouted back Raju.

The king looked on, frustrated and forlorn, as Raju inched closer to the fall.



handy sparkling rainbow spanned the waterfall and Raju looked like a little god under that divine arch. The tall hills adorned with green wood behind the fall stood resplendant in their glorious garb of sunlight.

Raju threw his hands behind and felt the frolicking splinters of the silver fall.

"I'm passing to the other side!" he announced loudly.

"But those who do so never return!" warned the king at the peak of his voice.

"Maybe. I don't know whether they cannot return or they don't care to. But I'll return, for, I must bring the secret of breathing life into the statue. Till then you must safeguard her!"

Raju's words were echoed in the hills. The king looked on fascinated.

"I'll safeguard her as my *luddoos* like a sackful of *luddoos*. Whoever would touch her will lose his head. But come back as soon as you can. I'll give you a chunk of my kingdom – and one of my daughters, a real princess as handsome as myself. But if you consider me ugly, I promise to beautify myself. I'll eat a chicken more and swallow a cup of honey more with my breakfast, pre-lunch, lunch, post-lunch, pre-dinner, dinner, and post-dinner dishes. I'll trim my hair daily and shave twice a day," shouted the king. "And I will never let the morning breeze ail me."

It is difficult to say if Raju heard all. He embraced the waterfall and, like the moon slipping into thicker and thicker clouds, he disappeared into the rhythmic cascade. *(To continue)*



# ADVENTURES OF PERSEUS (2)



Once Cassiope, the queen of Aethiopia, boasted before the nymphs that she was more beautiful than all of them and even the Goddess Juno.

The nymphs reported the queen's remark to Juno. At Juno's complaint, her brother, the god Neptune, sent a terrible monster to lay waste Aethiopia.



The oracle said that only if Cassiope's beautiful daughter, Andromeda, will be sacrificed to the monster that the curse would end. Andromeda was tied to a rock.

Perseus, on his return journey, saw her. When the monster came, he showed him Medusa's head which turned him into stone. Andromeda's parents were delighted.







Perseus loved Andromeda. Her parents had no objection to their marriage. A prince who came to win Andromeda forcibly was reduced to stone by Perseus.



With Andromeda Perseus was back at Seriphos and learnt that King Polydectes had imprisoned his mother and their saviour, Dictys. He reduced the king and his court to stone!



Perseus then rescued his mother and the old Dictys from a temple. Danae rejoiced at her brave son's return. They now left for Argos, Danae's father's kingdom.

The King of Argos, Perseus' grandfather, who feared death in the hands of Perseus, fled to Larissa. But, while taking part in public games at Larissa, Perseus accidentally killed him by a throw of discus. Thus was the prophecy fulfilled.







# DAMS THAT SAVED A COUNTRY

*Relentless struggle with the sea that continued for centuries*

It was a December night. Tides struck back at the men of Holland who had for so long been fighting a grim battle against the grey waters of the North Sea.

Their crude barriers were swept aside in a howling gale. In a matter of hours more than 80,000 people were drowned.

That was in 1287. A century and a half later, much the same thing happened again and thousands of families were wiped out. But the survivors were not discouraged. They returned to build up their sea defences again.

The Dutchman's determination to hold back the sea is almost as old as history, because his country has a coastline made up largely of the deltas of two great rivers.

About 4000 B.C. the first

settlement began along a stretch of sand. The settlers simply moved their villages whenever the sea threatened to wash them away.

Then about 500 B.C. these tribesmen seem to have decided to fight back. Instead of abandoning their settlements, they raised huge ten-metre-high mounds of earth called "terps" on which to build their homes.

Then the all-conquering Romans occupied the area and added their own genius for engineering to the native efforts.

## *Disaster strikes*

Between them, they succeeded in erecting an efficient system of sea defence until in about A.D. 300 the waves broke through with tremendous force.

The survivors did their



to stop further inundations, but without success. Disasters in 1287 and 1431 were setbacks that would have made any other race abandon the effort. But to the Dutch fighting the sea had always been a way of life.

The men who had suffered so much not only resolved to carry on the fight for survival but to go one better. Instead of simply trying to defend their country against the sea they determined to go on to the offensive and actually drive the sea out.

The system of winning back land from the sea is known as poldering. To make a polder, "you take a bit of sea, fence it in and then pump it out."

On paper this theory looks reasonable enough, but 500 years ago engineers lacked the necessary tools for the job, even on a small scale.

An area of water could be enclosed if sufficient manpower was there, but it could be emptied only by scoop wheels powered by man or horse in those days.

This made the task like clearing a beach of sand with a spoon! Then, about 1350, it was realised that windmills could be used to power water pumps.

Before long thousands of these picturesque devices changed the landscape of Holland.

Then came the invention of the steam engine as a source of pumping power. In 1891, Holland's most famous hydraulic expert, Dr. C. Lely, drew up a plan for constructing a barrier from North Holland to Friesland, shortening the coastline by some 300 km.

It took years before adequate finance for the vastly expensive scheme could be arranged, and the First World War delayed matters even further. Work finally began in 1923.

The first task was to build the Afsluitdijk or Great Barrier Dam, and to follow this immediately with the first of five great polders, that was to yield up no less than 20,000 hectares of usable land.

The work was completed in 1932, and even today it is a memorable experience to drive along the motor road that has been built on the top of the 28-km-long dam. During the Second World War, the Germans flooded the polder in an attempt to hold up the advance of the Allied troops. But the area was pumped dry by the Dutch within six months, and







crops were growing in the fields by the following year.

It is hoped that by the first half of the next century the Wadden Islands off the coast of Friesland will be linked not only with each other but also with the mainland, a project that, it is estimated, will take 46 years to complete.

Travel across a man-made polder and you are immediately aware that you are in a special

kind of land, literally a man-made marvel unlike anywhere else on earth. It is, of course, absolutely flat. The roads are as straight as rulers, for they were laid out before the farms.

The fields, full of mustard, flax and barley, also look uncannily orderly when compared with the haphazard pattern of traditional agricultural land.

It looks completely safe and settled. Nevertheless the Dutch know from bitter experience that they can never afford to relax.

So here and there you will probably notice groups of polder jongens, the experts who snatch land back from the sea. They keep a wary eye on their completed work to make sure that their old enemy does not get a chance to strike back.

To an outsider, it is sometimes hard to understand how great a menace the sea is to Holland. It is difficult for a traveller arriving at Schiphol international airport to convince himself that the huge jets are standing on runways that are four metres below sea level!

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## BURIED PROPERTY

Poor Ramdas was an honest villager. He was helpful to all and he never uttered a lie.

One night his house was burgled. Villagers who saw him shedding tears in the morning raised a subscription and made good his loss.

Jagu Singh was a wealthy miser. He grew jealous of Ramdas. One night he put his wife's ornaments and his money in a bag and buried it outside his compound. In the morning he raised a hue and cry telling the villagers that his house too had been burgled. He showed all and sundry his empty chests. People expressed their sympathy for him, but nobody raised the question of helping him with cash.

However, the people patrolled the village streets at night in batches. Jagu Singh found no opportunity to dig out his buried property.

A week later the zamindar decided to erect a temple on the ground adjoining Jagu Singh's compound. Work on the site began at once. A worker who was levelling the ground discovered Jagu Singh's buried bag.

"This is Lord's gift - meant to be spent for the temple," declared the zamindar.







## The Clever Four

In a certain village lived a wealthy farmer. He had gardens, orchards and landed property scattered at different places. He had four able-bodied sons and he ought not to have found it difficult to manage his estates. But, the pity was the sons were just strange!

"Give them work. The responsibility will make them exercise their minds. They will grow wise." This was a friend's advice to the farmer.

The farmer nodded in appreciation of the advice. He called his eldest son. "Will you please proceed to your maternal uncle's house and see how they are?" he asked.

The young man was ready to set out on his journey. "Look here, boy, there is scarcity in your uncle's village; not even

water and fire are available without difficulty. Do not spend more than two days there, even if they implore you to stay on," said his mother.

The young man, who thought himself clever, carried fire and water in two pots. Since it was difficult to carry two pots, he poured the water into the pot that contained the fire and threw away the empty pot.

He reached his destination. One of his uncles asked him, "What is there in the pot?"

"I understand that there is scarcity of water and fire in this area. I have brought both," the young man replied smartly.

"Water I see, but where is fire?"

"Under the water!" was the reply.

The uncles had a hearty laugh.

The report of the young man's adventure reached the farmer. He sighed and realised that it was futile to expect much from his eldest son.

One day he asked his second son to go to the fields and supervise farming. The boy was happy to go out. The workers were about to scatter the Til seeds in the fields. The young man picked up a handful of those seeds and munched them.

"My young master, you'll find fried Til quite tasty," said a worker. He then took a handful of raw seeds into the hut and brought them back, fried.

The young man was very

pleased with the taste of the fried Til. "Fry the entire stock of seeds!" he ordered.

At first the workers thought that he was joking. "It seems you like this. We can fry some more for you!" they said.

"Do as I say!" thundered the young man. "You obey me or I dismiss you."

"If we fry all the seeds, what do we sow?" they asked.

"You are wiser than I, eh? Fry them first, ask me next!"

All the seeds were fried. "What next?" asked the workers.

"Now scatter them in the fields, you fools! We will get a





sweet crop of fried Til. What blockheads you are to go on sowing raw Til and reaping raw Til year after year!" observed the young man.

The workers stood stunned. The report of the incident reached the father. He remained sad for long. No longer did he dare to ask the second son for any work.

The farmer had a dairy in a distant village. The manager of the dairy went on leave. The third son was sent there to take charge of it.

"Stop milking the cows from today," was the young man's first order.

"Why?" asked the surprised servants.

"I'm no fool to disclose the reason now," said the young man gravely. The servants kept quiet.

Three weeks passed. On the eve of a great festival, the young man called the servants and said, "Milk the cows now. The price of the milk has gone up, thanks to the festival. Do you fools now realise why I let the milk accumulate in the cows for three weeks?"

The servants did not know what to say. One of them said at last, "Master! Why didn't



you tell us of your motive earlier?"

"Why should I? I did not want my secret to be leaked out to other traders!" replied the young man.

The servants looked at one another and wiped sweat from their foreheads.

The cows did not yield even the regular daily quantity of milk. The news reached the father. He called back his son.

He now wanted to try his last son. He gave him two thousand rupees for capital to start some business.

The happy young man went out in search of luck. From



depot near a forest he bought sandalwood sticks with all his money. He hired a cart and went out to sell his ware for profit.

He offered them to a number of shop-keepers. But they said that they would like to buy their need from their regular suppliers.

The young man was running out of patience. He had travelled quite far. He asked some people of a village, "What is it that you don't get easily?"

"Well, we don't get coal easily," said the villagers.

The young man smiled. He immediately made a fire and changed his sandalwood into coal. But the price the coal fetched was no more than a mere twenty rupees!

"What is available cheap here?" he queried.

"Cotton," he was told.

He bought cotton for the twenty rupees and proceeded to a bazar where he desired to sell it.

"We don't buy unpurified cotton," said the cotton-sellers.

The young man saw a goldsmith putting his gold into fire.

"What are you doing?"

"Purifying the gold," replied the goldsmith.

"I see! So, this is how things are purified!" mused the young man. He dug a pit and made a fire in it. Then he went on consigning the cotton bales into the flames.

After the fire subsided, a strong wind blew the ash away.

The young man returned home and reported his adventure to his father.

The father sighed. "God help me!" he murmured.







*New Tales of King Vikram  
and the Vampire*

## Boon and Punishment

Dark was the night and eerie the atmosphere. Howls of jackals were subdued by the weird shrieks of the ghosts. It rained from time to time. Flashes of lightning revealed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree again and brought the corpse down. As soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying astride on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King, at times even the conduct of a sensible man seems queer. It appears there is nothing that some people cannot do for satisfying their selfish ends. Let me give you an instance. Listen to it attentively. That might bring you some relief."

The vampire went on: Long long ago the kingdom of Amara-





vati was ruled by Navinsen. But he fell sick. That is why Lalgupta, the commander of the king's army, was made to sit on the throne and rule the land. But after the death of both Navinsen and Lalgupta Chandrasen, the son of King Navinsen, ascended the throne.

This disappointed Virgupta, the son of Lalgupta. He tried to kill Chandrasen, but did not succeed. His motive became known. However, instead of punishing him, Chandrasen said, "Look, my dear friend, you love the throne. I love study. I suggest that you rule the kingdom for five years. Let me

spend that period in Varanasi, devoting myself to scholarship. But you must promise to rule in peace and restore the kingdom to me upon my return."

"Thanks, O noble prince. I promise to rule peacefully and restore the kingdom to you upon your return," said Virgupta.

Chandrasen left for Varanasi. Virgupta acted as the king.

The king of Mohanpur had a daughter named Manimala. She was as beautiful as she was gifted in different arts. Her father arranged for her *Swayamvara*. Invitations were sent to a number of princes.

But Virgupta received no invitation. He was annoyed. "What could be the cause of the King of Mohanpur ignoring me?" he asked his minister.

"My lord, the King of Mohanpur desires his daughter to be a queen. He knows very well that your tenure as king will last only for a few years. Why should he invite you?" replied the minister.

"I want to teach him a lesson. Prepare our army for a march on Mohanpur," said Virgupta angrily.

"My lord, please do not forget the fact that you have promised to rule peacefully





warned the minister.

But Virgupta paid no heed to the minister's advice. He sent his picture to the court of Mohanpur along with a message and a threat that he ought to be invited for the *Swayamvara*. Otherwise he would attack and destroy Mohanpur.

The King of Mohanpur flung Virgupta's picture away and tore his letter to pieces. Virgupta's emissary returned to his master, humiliated.

Virgupta declared war against Mohanpur.

The King of Mohanpur sent messengers to the princes who had been earlier invited by him, saying that the one who can behead Virgupta would be eligible to marry Manimala.

Several princes headed towards Amaravati with their armies, each one eager to behead Virgupta.

Spies carried the news of the impending attack on Amaravati to Prince Chandrasen at Varanasi. He set out for Amaravati at once. He climbed to the top of the castle and observed how hordes of soldiers were rushing towards his castle from different directions, headed by princes.

Virgupta too came up and



had a view of the invading armies. He was trembling with fear.

As soon as the invading princes reached the castle wall, Prince Chandrasen struck Virgupta with his sword. Virgupta's head rolled off the roof.

When the princes saw that Virgupta had already been beheaded by someone, they went away.

Chandrasen produced Virgupta's head before the King of Mohanpur. Needless to say, he married Princess Manimala.

The vampire paused and, in a challenging voice, demanded of King Vikram, "O King, was it

not treacherous of Chandrasen to kill Virgupta? How could a man who had been so sympathetic towards Virgupta before, behave in such a manner? Had his desire to marry Manimala turned him mad? Answer me, O King, if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your shoulders."

Answered King Vikram forthwith: "Before we judge Chandrasen, we must judge Virgupta's conduct. The fact that Virgupta had once tried to kill Chandrasen ought not to be forgotten. Chandrasen had not only forgiven Virgupta, but also had granted him a rare boon—kingship for five years!

"Virgupta had promised to rule peacefully. He broke his promise when he declared war

upon Mohanpur. Since he insisted on marrying Princess Manimala, it was obvious that he had decided to cling to the throne.

"We see that Virgupta had always conducted himself treacherously. He deserved death right at the beginning when he was going to kill Chandrasen. If Chandrasen killed him at last, it was not for his personal grievance, but for protecting his kingdom. An attack by so many princes would have ruined Amaravati totally. Virgupta, in any case, would have lost his head to one of the princes. Chandrasen did what an intelligent prince ought to do in that grave situation."

No sooner had the king finished replying than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.







## LEGENDS AND PARABLES OF INDIA

# Crazy In The Wilderness

Once upon a time there lived a merchant. He was beset with a disease and he came to know that his end was nearing. His only son was then very young. The merchant felt that it would be unsafe to leave all his wealth in the house. Taking advantage of his son's innocence wicked people might plunder everything.

However, there was a poor man whom the merchant had once saved from death. The poor man had since joined the merchant's household as a servant. The merchant trusted him very much.

The merchant put most of his

gold and money in a chest. One night he carried the chest with the help of that trusted servant into a forest. The forest was owned by him. He chose a spot where he buried the chest.

"My dear fellow, never speak a word of this buried wealth to anybody but to my son who would be your master after I am gone. When, upon growing up, he would ask you for this wealth, bring him along here and dig out the wealth," the merchant told the servant.

The servant took a solemn vow to do as instructed.

Soon thereafter the merchant died, but not before confiding



said the servant.

At night the two entered the forest. Suddenly the servant stopped.

"Why did you stop?" asked the young man.

"Shut up!" said the servant.

Surprised, the young man lifted his torch and looked at his servant's face. The old man looked unbelievably haughty.

"What about locating the spot?" asked the young man again.

"Who are you to command me? Am I your servant, you impudent chap?" shouted the servant with a menacing gesture.

The young man did not show any sign of anger. "Very well, I go back," he said calmly, and he turned to go. After a few seconds the old servant began to follow him.

Some days passed. The young man broached the issue of the buried wealth again. The servant said most eagerly, "Woe to me that I have not yet led you to the spot. I may die any day. Let's bring the wealth home tonight itself."

They set out again. But the servant suddenly stopped in the forest and, when the young man asked him about the buried wealth, he shouted at him, say-

to his son about the buried wealth. The son promised to keep his hands off the wealth until he had grown up.

Years passed. The merchant's son grew up. He thought that time had come when he could put the buried wealth to proper use.

"Uncle, will you kindly lead me to the spot where my father buried his wealth?" he asked the old servant.

"Yes, my young master, I too think that it is time for you to bring the wealth home. I am growing old. If I die before you have located the spot, the wealth will remain beyond your reach,"





ing, "Don't you know whom you are talking to? Behave properly or get out!"

The young man turned and began walking homeward. The old servant followed him.

Not far from the merchant's house lived a landlord—famous for his wisdom. He had been a great friend of the young man's father.

The young man met him the next day and told him all about the old servant's strange conduct. "I have lost the wealth, I'm afraid," he said with a sigh.

The landlord smiled. "You have almost discovered it," he said. "Next time when your servant stops and becomes rude, push him off the spot and dig. You'll find the wealth," assured the landlord.

The young man led the old servant into the forest again. When the man stopped and showed him red eyes, he pushed him to one side and dug at the spot and found the chest. The servant, at his command, carried it home for him.

When he met the landlord and thanked him, the landlord said, "The innocent man was unable to check the vibrations which the buried wealth sent into him. Wealth is a power. Most people lose their heads under its influence."

The landlord incarnated the Bodhisattva, the soul that was to be born later as the Buddha. Under his guidance, the young man spent his wealth in the right way.

—From the *Buddha Jatakas*





STORY OF INDIA - 52

## THE FALL OF TWO CITIES

Koshala, under Prasenjit, was a powerful kingdom. Prosperous was its capital, Shravasti. Once a spy informed Prasenjit that the Sakyas, the rulers of Kapilavastu, looked down upon him. This was because the Sakyas, as a clan, were superior to him.

Prasenjit felt deeply offended, more so because the Sakyas were subordinate to him. He paid a visit to Kapilavastu. He was received with great honour. He proposed that he be married to a Sakya princess. This is how he meant to raise his own status.



The Sakyas were in an awkward position. They could not turn down the powerful Prasenjit's proposal. After an exchange of quick whispers and glances, they offered one of their girls in marriage to their guest.





The happy Prasenjit returned to Shravasti. At night, while looking into the gifts the bride had brought, he found a letter written by a Sakya girl jealous of his bride, saying that the bride was not a Sakya princess, but a Sakya Chief's daughter born to a low-caste woman.



At once Prasenjit climbed to his roof-top and asked his bodyguards to ring the huge bell hanging in the attic. As the bell rang, thousands of soldiers came rushing out and stood before the palace, waiting for the royal order.

Before leading his army against Kapilvastu, Prasenjit came to see his bride. The innocent girl stood, weeping in silence. As Prasenjit gazed at her, his mood changed. He bade the army to disperse and acknowledged the bride as his queen.





Days passed. Prasenjit's queen gave birth to a son. The boy, Virodhaka by name grew up, well trained in all the military arts. Once on a visit to his maternal uncle's house, he was surprised to mark that the Sakya princes avoided sitting with him for dinner.

What could be the reason of this strange conduct of the Sakyas? Virodhaka asked his mother, back at Shravasti. His mother told him frankly that the Sakyas considered him low because she was low by birth. Virodhaka was furious.



"It was wrong of you to stomach the insult," Virodhaka told his old father insolently. Sensing a revolt, Prasenjit went to live with his daughter, the queen of Magadha. There he died a heart-broken man. Virodhaka ascended the throne.



The generale told the young king that the time was not ripe for a military expedition. The ministers told him that those who had cheated his father were no more. Even then Virudhaka marched upon Kapilavastu with a large army.



The Sakyas were not ready to face the attack. They could not put forth resistance. Virudhaka plundered the palaces of Kapilavastu and then put fire to them. Many were killed and the city was destroyed. Virudhaka returned.

But nothing was left of his own palace when he returned to Shravasti. The King of Magadha had attacked Shravasti, angered at Virudhaka's maltreatment of his father-in-law, Prasenjit. Shravasti had been annexed to Magadha!



## SON—TRUE AND FALSE

Gurucharan's wife died untimely, before giving birth to any child. Gurucharan adopted an orphan.

Gurucharan's younger brother, Shyamcharan, who lived in another village, came to meet him. "Brother, you ought to have married again. I do not think you did wise in adopting a son. Surely, he will never prove as good as one's own son," he observed.

Gurucharan kept quiet. Shyamcharan left for his own village.

Years passed. One evening Shyamcharan saw his elder brother coming towards him.

"Brother! What a pleasant surprise! But I am in a bad shape. My son has been very nasty towards me. That is why I have come over to this hut, leaving my own house. If my own son could do this to me, I can imagine what your adopted son would be doing to you," said Shyamcharan with a sigh.

"Shyam, you cannot imagine what my adopted son is doing to me. He nursed me day and night while I was ill. He is now on his way to the holy Ganga to immerse my ashes"—said Gurucharan's spirit and it disappeared.







## Talent Transferred

Anand was smart at his work. He was also honest. That is why Shyamsundar who had employed him in his shop liked him very much.

But there arose an unforeseen difficulty. Anand took to the practice of music. There was nothing wrong in anyone taking such a step. In fact Anand's interest in music should have been counted as a quality. But, the pity is, crows flew off and dogs barked when he began to sing. Sometimes even jackals gave out long moans.

Anand often felt the inspiration for singing at midnight. That disturbed not only Shyamsundar's sleep, but also his neighbours! Shyamsundar was quite embarrassed.

One night some people of the next village were returning from

a weekly market when Anand burst into a song. They rushed into Shyamsundar's compound and stopped in front of the outer room which Anand occupied.

"What is the matter?" Anand asked them in surprise.

"That is exactly what we wanted to know. Who shrieked and why?" asked the villagers.

"But I heard no shriek!" Anand was surprised again.

"Are you deaf? How could you miss that bizarre cry?" asked the villagers who were no less surprised.

"I could not hear it perhaps because I was absorbed in singing," said Anand.

The villagers looked at one another. "You were singing, is it? Will you please repeat your performance?" one of them





asked.

"Which singer won't be pleased to sing to a group of music-lovers like you!" said Anand, feeling flattered. At once he sat down and began to sing.

"Enough, enough! Stop!!" shouted the villagers. They took to the road, laughing and swearing.

Anand kept looking at them with fury in his eyes.

Shyamsundar did not want to hurt Anand's feelings. But he told him that it was not good for him to keep awake at night.

"My master! An artiste cannot care for sleep and ordinary things like that!" said Anand.

He failed to catch the meaning of Shyamsundar's advice.

Shyamsundar's wife gave birth to a son. Whenever Anand sang, the new-born child cried in horror.

Shyamsundar was obliged to tell Anand that he must not sing in his house.

"A man who does not appreciate music is not fit to be my master!" thought Anand. He threatened to resign his job if Shyamsundar did not allow him his freedom to sing. Shyamsundar reluctantly agreed to his quitting his work.

Sulking under his humiliation, Anand marched into the forests. "I have heard that music can charm even the beasts and birds of the forest. Well, let me sing for them when the human beings fail to appreciate me," he decided.

It was evening. He sat down on a rock and sang to his heart's content. He resigned to sleep when he was tired.

In a nearby cave lived a demoness with her young daughter. The demoness had a great desire to make an artiste out of her daughter. "In the past there were many singers and dancers among the race of the demons. There is none now. My daughter



ter could become a star if she learnt singing," she told herself.

She then called out for her daughter and, when she came, drew her attention at the sleeping singer.

"Mummy, don't you know that I dislike human flesh?" asked the demon-girl.

"Tut, tut, he is not your food, but your teacher," the demoness cautioned her.

Though they spoke in a low tone, their conversation sounded like the roar of two tigers. That woke Anand up. The demoness and her daughter saluted him. The demoness requested him to teach music to her daughter.

At first scared, Anand soon smiled with pride. "My talent is getting the recognition it deserves," he said.

He took a bath in the spring. The demoness led him into an orchard. It was full of fruits. He ate to his heart's content.

Soon he sat down with his student. He sang a small line and asked the demon-girl to follow him. As soon as she began doing so, Anand felt as if he heard a crack of thunder. "Go on," he told her and ran away into the orchard. He re-



turned in the evening. By then the demon-girl, tired, had stopped yelling.

Next day Anand taught her another line. But when she began chanting it, he felt as if there was an earthquake. He ran away again, to return in the evening.

"How is my daughter's progress?" the demoness asked him.

"Today she graduated in music," replied Anand.

"That is wonderful, isn't that? Very well, worthy teacher, let me reward you." The demoness entered her cave and came out with a bagful of gold which she





handed over to Anand.

Anand returned to Shyamsundar. "I transferred my talent in music to someone in the forest," he declared.

Shyamsundar did not understand what Anand meant.

Anand smiled and said, "I

had no talent for singing, but I had sincerity. God gave me some reward on account of that. Come on, let us start a new business with the wealth I have got."

He told his story. Shyamsundar was amused and happy.

## SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES







## SLEEPY SOMNATH

Somnath was popularly known as Sleepy Somnath. It was because the one thing he loved in life was sleep. He was never tired of dozing off at the smallest opportunity.

He was in his early teens when his father died. He neither paid any attention to his studies nor was he interested in any work. His mother took up domestic works in a couple of households and earned some money. They had a plot of land that was tilled by a farmer who gave them half the yield. The mother managed their both ends meet with difficulty.

Hiralal of Shantipur was a well-known merchant. He was much respected as an honest trader. Once every two years he set out on a voyage. His ship

touched several ports. He sold the merchandise he carried and brought things that were in demand in his own land.

He was preparing to launch another voyage in the company of a few other merchants. They had hired a larger ship.

Somnath's mother gave the boy a rupee and said, "Go and give this to Hiralal and ask him to buy something for you from any distant port."

Somnath was reluctant to take the trouble of going to meet the merchant. But his mother insisted on his doing so.

Hiralal was about to burst into laughter at Somnath's request. He was going with merchandise worth over five lakhs of rupees. How can he pay attention to Somnath's invest

ment of one rupee? However, he took pity on the boy and accepted the money.

"So, the boy has become our partner with his capital of a rupee, has he?" Hiralal's companions observed jocularly.

"Well, brothers, none of us began business with lakhs. Some of our forefathers might have begun with even as small an amount as one paisa! What is important is, the boy has faith in me. How can I turn down his request?" said Hiralal.

The weather was helpful. Hiralal's ship had a smooth sailing to Suvarna Dvipa. Hiralal and others sold their wares

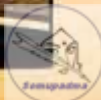
at good profit. Hiralal bought a large quantity of ivory and a few pieces of diamond.

It was after the ship lifted the anchor and was ready for farther voyage that Hiralal remembered Somnath.

"I must go ashore and buy something for the boy," he said.

"What! Must we set anchor again for a rupee worth of trade! Have patience, brother, we are to touch two other ports," Hiralal's friends told him.

After a fortnight their ship touched the second port. They saw a nomad with three monkeys. Two of them were dancing and showing a variety of





feats, but the third one sat idle, blinking at the sea.

Hiralal felt that the third monkey was sad at heart. As if it missed something and was longing for it. Hiralal, of course, had no time or interest to enquire about it.

They spent three days there. On the fourth day, as they would leave the port, Hiralal remembered his promise to Somnath. But he was tired and was in no mood to go into the city to buy anything for the boy.

The nomad was still there. "Would you like to sell one of your pets?" Hiralal asked the man.

"You can take this good-for-nothing one. I bought it from a boatman for a rupee, but it refuses to learn any trick," the nomad frankly informed him.

"I am ready to pay you a rupee for it," said Hiralal and he bought over the monkey.

Another week's voyage took them to an island famous for pearls available near its shore. The islanders dived into the waters and came out with oysters and sold them to merchants. Some oysters were found to contain pearls, some yielded nothing. The merchants were willing to take chances.

As soon as Hiralal's ship cast



anchor, the divers became active. They made dive after dive and sold the oysters they got to Hiralal and his companions.

Suddenly the monkey plunged in the water and emerged with two robust oysters. Handing them over to Hiralal, it made another dive and came out with yet another pair of oysters. All the four oysters were found to contain excellent pearls.

Hiralal understood that the monkey belonged to that island. Its master had taught it the art of diving and discovering oysters. Perhaps one day it went to sleep in a boat which left the shore without its knowledge. The boatman who did not know its special trait had sold it to the nomad at the other port for a rupee. Now the monkey was happy at the opportunity it got to prove its merit.

Next day Hiralal's ship left for Shantipur. On reaching home, Hiralal summoned Somnath and gave him the monkey as well as the pearls. "The monkey, bought with your money, was yours from the start. That is why whatever wealth it has produced is yours too," he said.

Somnath's joy and surprise knew no bounds. "A mere monkey could produce a fortune. What a pity that being human I idle away my time!" he thought. He sold the pearls and with the money started a business. Once a year he went near the island with his monkey and gathered pearls.

A time came when people stopped referring to him as Sleepy Somnath. Instead, he became known as Somnath the Merchant.





## BOTH SATISFIED

Menaka came to know that Shanti, her neighbour, was going to the market to buy a cow.

Jealous by nature, Menaka shouted at her, "What do you know of cows that you are going to buy one? I won't be surprised if you return without any!"

Shanti said nothing. In the evening Menaka saw that she was returning without a cow.

"Where is your cow?" Menaka asked.

"Could not bring home any!" replied Shanti.

"Didn't I say that you would return empty-handed?" said Menaka with great satisfaction.

Shanti said nothing. But she had been no less satisfied. She had brought a nice cow. On her way, the zamindar saw it and liked it immensely. He gave her a hundred rupees more and bought it off her.





## The Arabian Nights

# The Jester's Reward

Caliph Harun al-Rashid heard about a jester who could make anybody laugh. He sent one of his attendants, Masrur, to bring the jester along to the court.

Masrur met the jester, Iban al-Karibi by name. "I offer you a great opportunity, O Jester!" said he. "I can present you to the Caliph!"

"You'll do me a great favour thereby, friend," said the jester. He considered it a rare honour to meet the Caliph. He had no doubt about his capacity to amuse him. And he knew that to amuse the Caliph would mean earning a handsome reward.

"But, look here, Iban al-Karibi, you have to give me three-fourth of the reward you receive from the Caliph," informed Masrur gravely.

The jester's spirit was down. "I'll part with one-fourth of the reward," he proposed. "Be satisfied with that."

"Nothing less than three-fourth would induce me to lead you to the Caliph's presence," said Masrur.

"Be sensible, friend, it is my wit that would earn me a reward. How can I bear parting with the greater part of it? Come on, let us agree to divide the reward equally between us," bargained the jester.

"What I have said is final," said Masrur.

The jester gave up. He agreed to the condition.

The Caliph was in a





mood. He showed no particular interest in the jester, but ordered him to tell a funny story.

The jester began narrating a dull story that grew more and more dull. The Caliph lost patience. "This is hardly funny. Let's hear another story," he said.

This time the jester told a story that was a jumble of meaningless situations quite unrelated to one another.

"How come this fellow presumed to amuse me?" growled the Caliph. He ordered the jester to be whipped.

"My lord, kindly order the whipper to strike me four times," said Iban al-Karibi.

This strange request at last amused the Caliph a bit. "Let it be so," he said.

No sooner had the whipper struck the jester than the jester cried out, "Please wait. The rest of the payment is due to Masrur."

"What do you mean?" asked the Caliph.

"My lord, your servant Masrur had made a condition that he must have three-fourth of whatever I receive from you. I have received one stroke; the other three ought to go to him," said the jester feigning



complete innocence.

The Caliph now understood why the jester was not coming out with his stock of funny stories. He laughed and ordered Masrur to be whipped.

"Enough, my lord, enough, I give up my claim to any share in the jester's reward," cried out Masrur after the very first stroke.

The Caliph asked the whipper to stop. The jester then went on telling story after story that made the Caliph and his courtiers burst their spleens! He returned from the court a rich man. Nobody claimed a share in his reward.



A young man walked to a police officer standing in front of a restaurant. "Sir!" he whispered, "I think I've spotted a dangerous man. He is lying asleep on a bench in the Railway platform."

"Who is he?" asked the officer, lowering his voice. His fingers were already playing on the leather-case fastened to his belt. The case contained a pistol. He took a step forward towards the Railway platform.

"I'm sure, it is Chandra Shekhar Azad!" whispered the young man.

The officer fell short of giving out a shriek. He took a backward step and muttered, "You fool, why didn't you say that first? Did you want me to die?"

The officer hurried away—to come back after half an hour with a dozen of policemen. But the bench in the Railway platform had by then fallen vacant.

Chandra Shekhar Azad had become a terror to the police. No officer would alone dare apprehend him. He worked with the swiftness of a panther

and made good his escape in the same style. The police had closed in their fool-proof net upon him at least ten times—every time sure of nabbing him—but he had eluded them. The British Government announced a reward of thirty thousand rupees for anybody who could help capture him.

Since that day he was called Chandra Shekhar Azad.

His name was just Chandra Shekhar. He was born in 1906 at Bhaora, a village in Madhya Pradesh. He joined the non-co-operation movement in 1921 and was arrested. When asked in the court, he said that his name was *Azad* (Freedom) and that his father's name was *Bharat Varsha* and mother's *Bharat Mata*!

He was ordered to be punished with twelve cane lashes. At each stroke he shouted, "Inquilab Zindabad!" "Bharat-Mata ki Jai!"

The twelve strokes were brutal. He bathed in blood and fell senseless and had to remain in a hospital. On release, he said, "Never again shall the foreign





agents catch me!"

Indeed, he was never caught alive.

Soon he came to think that the British power ought to be given violent shocks. That alone would make them realise that they cannot continue to rule this country. He became one of the organisers of a revolutionary group called the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army.

He participated in a daring raid on a mail train at Kakori. The train was carrying a large amount of Government money, guarded by 16 armed guards including two Englishmen. But they stood unnerved before Chandra Shekhar and his compatriots.

The amount looted was only five thousand rupees. But the Government spent a million rupees to catch and try the band of looters. 18 young men were arrested and jailed, but Chandra Shekhar could not be traced.

Soon he and Bhagat Singh, another famous revolutionary, were working together. A British Superintendent of Police, J. A. Scott, had grown notorious for his cruelty towards the freedom-fighters. The revolutionaries decided to put an end to



Scott. They shot at him, but Scott escaped, while his assistant, another Englishman, died.

Chandra Shekhar was busy organising groups of young men here and there for a future uprising.

At last on the 27th of February 1931, a spy located Chandra Shekhar in a public park at Allahabad, talking to a friend. A police party surrounded the area and slowly they crawled towards him. The moment Chandra Shekhar became conscious of the trap, he whipped out his revolver. Immediately the police started shooting.

Azad ordered his friend to escape. Then, with revolvers in both the hands, he answered the enemy's attack.

Needless to say, it was an unequal fight. But Chandra Shekhar kept the police at bay for twenty minutes, hiding behind a tree.

He was riddled with bullets and his wrist broken. Only then he fell. Even after that an officer fired a last shot at him. They were just afraid of coming near him before being sure that he was "fully" dead!

Chandra Shekhar was lying dead in the park! The news spread. Thousands came to have a last glimpse of the hero. They took away sprinkles of earth that had been soaked in

his blood.

After his body was removed and cremated, the people began adoring the tree that had given shelter to the hero. They dabbed sandalwood paste and vermilion on it. The authorities were incensed. They cut down the tree!

One of the two revolvers used by Chandra Shekhar during his last fight had been taken away by the then Police Superintendent of Allahabad, John Bower (later Sir John Bower) to England. He preserved it in the hero's memory. The Government of Uttar Pradesh persuaded him to part with it a few years ago. It was exhibited in 1972, the Silver Jubilee of India's independence.







## GLIMPSES OF THE DEVI BHAGAVATAM

In the fisherman's house Matsyagandha grew up into a beautiful damsel. One day the sage Parashara came there for crossing the river. The fisherman was busy. Matsyagandha plied the boat with the sage for her passenger. Parashara had never seen a beauty like Matsyagandha. He kept on gazing at her. Matsyagandha, without taking notice of the sage's attraction, kept on rowing.

It was a fine day. The scenes along the river-bank were charming. Sweet was the breeze. Birds sang as they flew across the river.

Matsyagandha was humming a song as she plied the boat. By

and by the boat reached the middle of the river.

Matsyagandha, at one time grew conscious of the fact that the sage kept on gazing at her. She looked at the sage and smiled.

Parashara confessed that he had been enamoured of Matsyagandha. Matsyagandha felt embarrassed. She told him that she was the daughter of a mere fisherman while Parashara was a famous sage. It would not look decent for Parashara to be fascinated by her.

But Parashara, out of his love for Matsyagandha, gave her two boons. Matsyagandha, on account of her living amidst





fish, smelled like a fish. Parashara's boon made it possible for her to smell like a flower. Secondly, Parashara blessed her saying that she would give birth to his son.

Soon thereafter the two parted. Matsyagandha carried the sage's child although she remained a virgin.

Matsyagandha gave birth to a son who is none other than Vyasa.

The infant Vyasa told his mother, "I must hurry into the forest for beginning my *Tapasya* but whenever you would remember me I would come along to meet you."

And nothing could induce the boy to give up his aim.

Vyasa became a celebrated sage. It was he who classified and edited the Vedas. He also wrote some Puranas and compiled many more. He is known to everybody as the poet of the Mahabharata. His disciples too became famous. Among them are Sumanta, Jaimini, Pylo, Vaisampayan, Asit, Devala; and his son Sukadev.

Later Matsyagandha was called Satyavati. She continued to live with her foster-father.

One day king Shantanu, while hunting near the river saw Satyavati. It was spring. The trees and creepers abounded in flowers. Satyavati herself looked no different from a blooming flower. King Shantanu desired to marry Satyavati. Her foster-father agreed to the proposal.

The hermits who were listening to this narration from Suta, interrupted him. "O Learned One, we are much pleased to hear what you have said about the birth of Vyasa. But how could Shantanu, a scion of the famous Kuru dynasty, marry a fisherman's daughter? Was he not already married? Was Bhishma not his son? explain," they said.





**Suta resumed:**

In the olden days there was a king named Mahavisa. Through his Yajna and offerings he had befriended Indra, the king of gods. As a result he could visit heaven whenever he liked.

Once Mahavisa got a chance to pay a visit to Brahma along with the gods. At the time Ganga too was present before Brahma. Mahavisa was much attracted towards Ganga. Soon it became clear that she too was feeling attracted towards the king.

Brahma could understand their minds. "Go to the earth and lead your lives as a human couple," said Brahma.

Ganga was not happy with this order, but there was nothing to be done about it.

King Mahavisa was born as the son of King Pratip of the Puru dynasty.

Around the time another interesting situation arose. One day the eight Vasus—belonging to the order of the gods—went to meet Sage Vashistha. One of the Vasus was Prabhas. His wife was charmed to see Nandini, Vashistha's wonderful cow.

At her query Prabhas said that whoever drank Nandini's milk was free from all ailments.



"In that case let us lead this cow away to our home. I should consider my life to go in vain if I do not get this cow," Prabhas' wife pleaded with her husband and the other Vasus.

The Vasus should have done better not to pay any heed to the proposal made by Prabhas' wife. But they could not resist her appeal. They stole away the cow.

Their mischief did not remain hidden from Vashistha. He cursed them saying that since they were not different in their conduct from the human beings, they be born as human beings.

The Vasus were repentant.



They apologised to the great sage. "I cannot withdraw my curse. You have to be born as human beings. But excepting Prabhas who has to live a long life, others can return to heaven soon after their birth," said Vashistha.

The Vasus met Ganga on their way to earth. They greeted her with folded hands. "Mother Ganga, we are doomed to be born as human beings. We understand that you too are going to lead the life of a human being. Grant that we should be born as your sons. And kindly see to it that we are liberated as soon as we are born." Ganga

nodded.

One evening Ganga, assuming a human form, was strolling along the river-bank. She saw a man seated in meditation. From his features she could understand that he was a great man. Ganga came and sat down on his right thigh. The man opened his eyes and said politely, "Who are you? Whoever you might be you chose to sit down on my right thigh. That is a privilege which one's own children can enjoy. Hence you are like my daughter. Should you agree, I would like my son to marry you."

The man was none other than King Pratip. He had realised that the young lady was a certain goddess under some curse.

Pratip's son was Shantanu—who in his previous life was King Mahavisa.

King Pratip transferred his throne to Shantanu and left for *Tapasya* in the forest.

One day Shantanu met Ganga in the forest. Ganga at once understood who Shantanu was. She looked at him and smiled.

"I am delighted to see you. I do not understand why I feel that I have known you for long. I shall be grateful to you if you agree to marry me," said



Shantanu.

"I believe you are the son of King Pratip. Your father had already decided in favour of our marriage. I have no objection to marry you. But I must put forth some conditions," said Ganga.

"What are your conditions?" asked the king.

"You must not interfere in my actions, even when they seem very unusual or disagreeable to you. Secondly, you must not speak even one harsh word to me," answered Ganga.

Shantanu agreed to these conditions. The marriage was performed. Ganga came to reside in Shantanu's palace as his queen.

After a year Ganga gave birth to a son. King Shantanu was delighted. But his delight was short-lived. Ganga carried the child to the river-bank and hurled it into the waters. The king was shocked, but he kept quiet remembering the conditions of their marriage.

Seven years passed. Ganga consigned seven of her sons to the river. Needless to say, they were seven of the eight Vasus. Sacrificed in the river they were instantly liberated.

Then was born the eighth son.



King Shantanu could not check himself any longer. When the queen began moving out of her room with the new-born child held to her bosom, the king said, "Stop, O Queen, don't do the same brutal thing again!"

Ganga stopped and cast a stern look at Shantanu. Then she walked out of the palace. The king got annoyed.

"Don't be cruel! I am not going to let you destroy this child, you heartless woman!" shrieked out the king.

Slowly Ganga turned towards the king. "You have violated both the conditions. You have interfered with my work and



you have spoken harshly to me. I cannot continue to live with you. But know that I am not going to throw this child into the river. This one is destined to live long. I will nurture the child in the forest. When it grows up, I will deliver it into your hands. Those who have

departed are his brothers, the Vasus. It was on account of their prayer to me that I liberated them as soon as they were born as human beings," she said.

The king stood helpless. Ganga left with her eighth son.

(To Continue)

## WONDER WITH COLOURS





## WHO DISCOVERED AMERICA

It is usually said that Christopher Columbus (1451—1506) 'discovered' America to the rest of the Western world in the year 1492.

But now it is believed that at least six centuries before him the *Vikings* or the Scandinavian "sea-warriors" had explored America.

Eric the Red of Iceland, who not only explored, but also lived in Greenland for three years, could be the captain of a Viking boat that had reached America. Those boats were light, easy to sail, and capable of going strong through storms and upheavals in the sea.





## The Bandit's Son

Ramsingh was a bandit. So were his father and grandfather. However, Ramsingh's son Harisingh was different. He loved to help people. When Ramsingh wanted to take Harisingh with him on his nefarious mission, Harisingh said, "Father, I'd labour hard and earn a living rather than steal!"

"Don't be a fool. Do you mean to say that my sires were unwise? They have handed down the art of stealing to us. The necessary knack runs through our veins. You can lead a comfortable life by learning the tricks from me!" said Ramsingh.

"Sorry. It's a wicked profession," quipped Harisingh.

His father got angry and drove him out of home. He

went on looking for a job. A merchant, Shekhar Rao, employed him as a durwan.

Shekhar Rao traded in diamonds. He had a rival named Ravi Chowdhury. Once a foreigner offered to them some diamonds at a cheap price. Shekhar Rao bought two pieces; Chowdhury bought four.

Afterwards Shekhar Rao proposed to buy Chowdhury's four diamonds. He planned to sell them abroad at a good profit. But Chowdhury did not agree to part with his property.

One day Shekhar Rao told Harisingh in confidence: "You are to escort me to Chowdhury's shop. I'd examine his diamonds. While I keep him engaged in conversation,



are to pick up the diamonds and slip away."

"My master, my forefathers were bandits and burglars. I've decided to break away from their tradition," informed Harisingh politely.

"What! You're a bandit's son, are you? Had I known this I would not have engaged you in my service!" shouted Shekhar Rao. Harisingh was dismissed—then and there.

Two days later Chowdhury met Shekhar Rao and said, "I am travelling far. The conditions prevailing in the country are not good. I do not think that these four precious diamonds would be safe in my house. Will you please keep them in your custody?"

"Well, why not?" said Shekhar Rao. He accepted the dia-

monds.

Chowdhury came to take back his diamonds after fifteen days.

"Diamonds? What diamonds? Why should you give me diamonds? If at all you did give, where is the receipt?" asked Shekhar Rao, feigning surprise.

Chowdhury laughed. "Don't you worry, my friend, I don't mind losing what I had left with you. They were no more than pieces of glass. Harisingh told me how you wanted to steal my diamonds. I just wanted to see if you were that bad! Now I am confirmed in my impression. Shekhar Rao! Poor Harisingh may be the son of a bandit, but you are the worst sort of bandit!"

Chowdhury took Harisingh in his service.



# NEWS



## Lost Symphony Found

From a bunch of old papers given away to a Bavarian library has been found an invaluable gem – a symphony by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791).

Mozart was a prodigy. Musical pieces composed by him when he was four are still preserved and played. The one now discovered was composed by him when he was nine.

## Right out of Wrong?

Einstein, the great scientist, formulated his special theory of Relativity on the basis of what is known as Lorentz transformation. Now, a famous mathematician, Juan Alberto Morales of Panama, has proved that the Lorentz transformation itself was erroneous.

But this does not mean that the theory of Relativity is wrong! – he says.

If a thinker can hit a right principle proceeding through a wrong principle, that only means that he had in fact hit it through his intuition. The discarded principle might have helped him to explain his idea.





# FLASH



## Electronic Physician

Russian scientists have given birth to an electronic "doctor" who would record every detail of his patient's health and analyse the information almost simultaneously.

## Message of the Season

"Even in exceptional circumstances, one can never justify any violation of the fundamental dignity of the human person or of the basic rights that safeguard his dignity"—Pope John Paul II.



## The Wonder Boy

We-Ruoyang of China, aged twelve, has baffled scientists. He can see through a wall and tell what are there on the other side. He can see tumour hidden in people. In other words, he has X-ray eyes. What is more, he can read the thoughts of his mother.



# PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Mr. P. Sankararajan



Mr. Venkat K. Pinn

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail to Photo Caption Contest, Chandanama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 25/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The prize for the February '81 goes to:  
Miss C.S.K. Vidhya, 8/14, Park Site Colony,  
Vikhroli Fire Brigade, Bombay 400 079.

The Winning Entry - 'Flapping Pigeon' 'Gallopping Stallion'

## PICKS FROM THE WISE

Don't believe that the world owes you a living; the world owes you nothing - it was here first.

— Robert Jones Burdette

An expert is one who knows more and more about less and less.

— Nicholas Murray Butler

The defects of great men are the consolation of dunces.

— Isaac D'Israeli





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April 1981



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**505**

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Free Air Fare for child ex-Delhi, ex-Calcutta, ex-Patna. Free Accommodation for child and both parents on the 2-star package.

## **251 Consolation Prizes**

1 years' Free Subscription of Target or Indrajal comics or Chandamama or Parag (of Nandan's choice of winner)



# RAM & SHYAM

GO 'TROUBLE SHOOTING'.

RAM, THIS JOURNEY  
SEEMS VERY LONG!

YES... AND I HAVE  
RUN OUT OF SONGS.



HEY LOOK! I'VE A FEELING  
SOMETHING NASTY'S HAPPENING...  
THERE'S A DARK DIRTY VILLAIN  
SELLING POPPINS TO LITTLE CHILDREN.



YES! THE POPPINS HE'S SELLING  
ARE CHEAP IMITATIONS...  
BAD FOR HEALTH AND BAD  
FOR DIGESTION!



AH SHYAM,  
GO TELL THE KIDS  
ABOUT THIS MAN'S  
WRONG DEEDS...



WHILE I TAKE THIS HANDFUL OF  
REAL POPPINS AND AIM AT HIS BIG FEET.



AH LOOK! HE IS SLIPPING...  
I'LL GET HIM. HE'S FALLING...  
IT'LL TEACH HIM A LESSON  
TO STOP ALL THIS... CHEATING



MEANWHILE I THINK... I'LL TAKE  
THESE REAL POPPINS AND  
GIVE THEM TO THE KIDS...  
THEY DESERVE A TREAT.



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